VINDICATOR

The journal of classic science fiction, fantasy and military boardgames from yesterday — and today

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DUMBER THAN A BOX OF ROCKS

Commentary / Duke Ritenhouse

In compiling the information that eventually resulted in the microgame checklist on page 5, I had the opportunity to pull a lot of classic games off the shelf and examine them again — sometimes, for the first time in years.

In a few cases, I even popped the lids off, unfolded the maps, and moved a few counters around as I re-read the rules. All of which helped lead me to one inescapable conclusion: as I'm getting older, I'm also getting stupider.

I was a typical role-player and boardgamer as I grew up. I mastered the ins-and-outs of **D&D** pretty quickly, and also enjoyed playing, collecting and modifying many of the popular wargames of the time, particularly those from the Metagaming line. Like most of you, it didn't take me long to make the leap from learning a game, to knowing most everything there was to know about it, to designing optional rules and adding other modifications.

Fast-forward to the present. Not counting **Ogre** and **G.E.V.** — which are pretty much burned into my long-term memory — I don't honestly think there's a game system out there that I can say I've mastered. Some I've forgotten (some *deserved* to be forgotten), some I never really knew that much about in the first place, and some are kind of drifting in a nether-region of "I sort-of remember playing this, but I can't recall too many of the rules."

I examined **Outpost Gamma** pretty closely for the review that appears in this issue, and I'm embarrassed to admit that I don't think I could play it now. What's scary is that I *have* played it, more than once. I specifically remember that it was my friend Mark's first SF/fantasy boardgame purchase (we were hard-core TSR mind-slaves at the time, so this was a significant step for him), and we started playing our first game almost as soon as the shrinkwrap came off the box. Now, though ... one look at the terrain rules as I prepared to write the review and I was thinking: "I couldn't play this game for $20 and a case of Snapple." The thought of re-learning a game such as **Titan Strike** is enough to make me slightly nauseous; I consider trying to play **Hitler's War** almost ludicrous; and it's laugh-out-loud funny to picture myself trying to master **Squad Leader** again — despite the fact that I was a pretty fair player in my late teens.

What's it all mean? Am I, truly, dumber than a box of rocks?

Well, not really. I think I'm just experiencing something that most of the readers of this newsletter can relate to — there's just too much Real World stuff going on to enjoy games the way I did as a young man. Time spent learning rules is now time spent worrying about financial matters; time spent actually playing is now time time spent with my spouse (who's not a bad **Knightmare Chess** and **Dino Hunt** player, but that's a story for another day); time spent actually mastering a system is now time spent either working or commuting to and from the daily grind.

It's a sad reality, but it also makes me appreciate VINDICATOR all the more. Publishing this newsletter has helped connect me to a simpler era — a time when dragons and laser tanks were more important than car payments and meetings. It's a time machine we all can ride for a few days every couple of months. I hope the ride means as much to you as it does to me.

APPLYING NAVAL TACTICS TO SPACE COMBAT / Timothy Swenson

Introduction

At first glance, space and naval combat might not seem to have much in common. Naval combat is based in the past or present. Space combat, if such a thing ever comes about, will be based in the distant future. Naval combat is based on real ships and real situations. Space combat is based on fanciful ideas and made-up situations.

But the two share two key points in common: terrain-less battle area and multi-part units. Naval and space combat are fought on battle grounds with no terrain. Naval combat is fought on the open seas; space combat will be fought out in the vast expanse of space.

Most space combat games define each ship as having lots of subparts that are destroyed as the game progresses. When a number of key subparts are destroyed, the ship is considered destroyed. This is exactly the same way that naval combat is gamed.

War of attrition

Out on the open seas, there is no place to hide or take cover. Firing your weapons on the enemy means that you must expose yourself to his weapons. You have to take hits to deliver hits. There is no defensive position to take. There is no high ground to hold. It's just pure ship against ship.

There are a few things you can do to give yourself an advantage in facing your enemy:

Have greater range: If you have a greater weapons range than your enemy, you can sit outside his range, avoiding his attacks, and deliver your attacks.

Greater range usually means a less effective attack, due to a lesser chance of hitting your target and the lesser force of your weapons. This is a small price to pay for unreturned fire.

Historically, in a situation like this, you would have to have a good system for aiming your shots. Early naval combat took place at close quarters because aim was harder to achieve than range.

Have bigger and/or more weapons: The bigger or more weapons you have in relation to your enemy, the greater your odds at winning. Having more weapons means that you can deliver more hits than the enemy. Having bigger weapons than your enemy means that

Out on the open seas, there is no place to hide or take cover. Firing your weapons on the enemy means that you must expose yourself to his weapons. You have to take hits to deliver hits. There is no defen - sive position to take. There is no high ground to hold. It's just pure ship against ship.

each successful hit delivers greater damage. The results are your destroying more of the enemy's firepower over time than he of yours. This translates into victory for you.

Have greater armor: The greater your armor, the more hits you can take and not sustain serious damage. Any enemy shot that does not do serious damage is a wasted shot. Do not go overboard in armor. In systems in which you are allowed to design ships, having a lot of armor usually means having fewer weapons. Historically, lots of armor meant a heavier ship, which would take more effort to move it, which meant a less maneuverable ship.

Attack effectively first

This is the first rule of naval warfare. Advantage in battle goes to the first shot. Getting off the first shot means that you can inflict damage on your enemy before he does so on you. Destroying any of your enemy's weapons before they are allowed to fire equates to the enemy never having them at all.

"Effectively" means that you must make your hits count. If you get off the first shots, but they are poorly aimed, it is as if you never fired at all.

There are three means that can assist in attacking effectively first:

Mass: Mass is having more ships and weapons than your enemy. You want to get all of your forces into battle as soon as possible. This gives you the mass to make your first blow a serious one.

Concentration: Concentration is focusing the main efforts of your forces on a few key enemy ships. You don't need to attack his entire fleet at the same time. If you can mass

your forces and attack a small portion of his fleet, while avoiding as much enemy fire from the other ships, your attacks will be more effective.

Maneuver: Maneuver is getting your ships where they can be the most effective exactly when you need them to be. In firing first effectively, you must get as many ships as possible into firing position at the time you want to fire. Without effective maneuvering you cannot achieve the mass you need, which will not allow you to achieve any effective concentration.

Maneuver can easily be applied before the battle begins. If, through maneuver, you can manipulate your opponent to maneuver where you want him to be then you have an advantage.

The reason you want to attack effectively first is to destroy some of the enemy's weapons before they get a chance to be used on your forces. This lessens the number of weapons the enemy has and increases your odds of destroying the enemy. Why? Because of the nature of attrition warfare and the concentration of force.

Having the larger force is very important in both naval and space combat. If you are the weaker force, then you might need to think if this is really the right time to fight. What should the difference be between the two forces to make an impact on the battle? The Naval War College did some gaming prior to World War II, came up with their own evaluations of relative strengths (not just the number of ships) and applied them to their wargaming. With odds of 2:1, the smaller side was removed from the game. Odds of 3:2 caused the lesser force to lose half its strength. With odds of 4:3, the superior force defeated its adversary, but took enough damage to limit its ability to fight another battle soon.

Reserves are a waste of forces

In ground combat, reserves are used to give that final blow to the enemy. They let you unleash well-rested forces against a hopefully tired and weary enemy, breaking their will to continue fighting. This does not work in naval combat.

Ground combat is based on the man. The
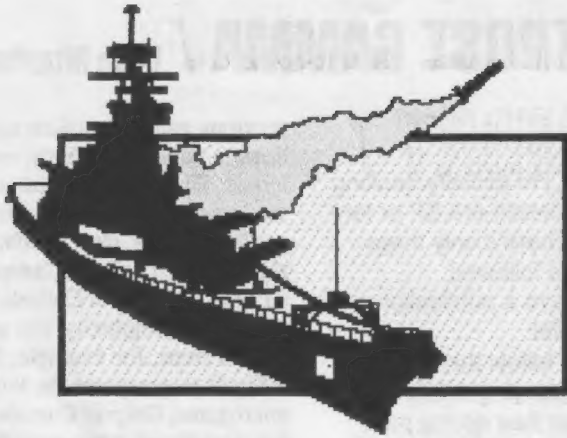
▶ from page 2

will or morale of men is critical. Breaking the will of the enemy starts with breaking the will of a few of the enemy. Reserves are used to break the will of the enemy by hitting him hard when he is tired and weak. Loss of morale is contagious on the battlefield. Seeing the man next to you retreating does not instill confidence. Once a battle line begins to break it is very hard to stop and reform it.

In naval combat, the war is against the machine. Breaking the will of a few of the enemy does not usually spread to the whole ship.

If you are going to try to break someone's will, aim for the captain of the ship or the commander of the fleet. They are the ones who decide when to retreat. If the enemy commander does not decide to retreat, then you must destroy his ability to fight by destroying the ships' weapons. Even with high morale for its sailors, a ship that has no weapons cannot continue the battle.

Because naval combat is attrition-based, you want the greatest number of forces at the very beginning. You want to inflict as much damage to your enemy as you can before he has time to return the favor. Keeping forces in reserve does not allow you to inflict as much damage as you can.

To know tactics, know technology

Tactics change with technology. Tactics are heavily based on using what weapons you have as effectively as you can. A ship that has torpedoes will use different tactics than a ship that has guns.

Here are a few key points. They are discussed in terms of wargaming and apply both to naval and space combat:

Know your units: In wargaming terms, your forces are your units. Know what units you have, what weapons they have, how fast they are, how strong they are, etc. Tailor your tactics to the capabilities of your units.

Know the rules: Wargaming is based on the rules of the game. Knowing the rules lets you know exactly what you can and cannot do. Not knowing the rules means that you might not know all of your available options. Sometimes there are rules that you can exploit to use in your favor. At the same time, you don't want to be unsporting and abuse the rules.

Defense is the weaker

Taking a defensive position means waiting for the enemy to come to you. This breaks the first rule of naval warfare: Attack effectively first. Taking a defensive position does not give you mass, concentration or maneuver. It allows your enemy to attack you on his terms, not yours.

In ground combat, the defense is almost always the stronger position. The defense is based on both terrain (something to hide behind) and position (the enemy has to move you). Neither terrain nor position is available in naval combat.

Manuever

In ground combat, not only is where you are in relation to the enemy important, but where you are in relation to terrain is also important. Holding the high ground is important for defense. The concept of maneuver warfare is to outmaneuver and to make the enemy's position less useful to him.

In naval combat, position is not as vital. There is no flanking maneuver; there is no rear to guard. The only position important is the relation of the enemy to your weapons. You must have as many weapons aimed at the enemy as possible. Your enemy will try to maneuver so that as few as possible of your weapons are able to fire on him. This is the only maneuvering that really counts.

THE HONG KONG RULES

A variant for Illuminati Deluxe / Walter O'Hara

A New Zealander expatriate living in Hong Kong (whose name, alas, I have long since forgotten) once mentioned to me that he liked to play the suggested "Illuminati cards face down" variant mentioned in the Illuminati Deluxe game in the "Advanced Play" section, only he liked to add in a 5MB reward for guessing the hidden Illuminati correctly. I've called this style of play The Hong Kong Rules ever since.

How it works

1. All Illuminati (pink-faced) cards are dealt face down. All Group (whitefaced) cards are played as in the basic game. The basic victory conditions for controlling groups (see the rules summary) are halved for speed of play. Free Actions are limited to two per turn.

2. Courtesy rules are enforced. A player may not attack another player until that player controls three groups or three game turns have passed.

3. Players may guess the identity of another player's Illuminati under the following conditions:

• The guess counts as a Free Action.

• The guess must be made after regular actions (attacks, etc.) are made.

• The guess must be announced loudly, clearly, and dramatically (suggested format: standing and saying "YOU, sir, are the ... BAVARIAN ILLUMINATI !").

• The player being "accused" must respond truthfully, loudly, clearly, and dramatically.

• Courtesy rules extend to guessing.

• If a player guesses an Illuminati identity correctly, he is given a reward. 5MB for three or fewer players, 3MB for four or more players. OR one privileged attack for the next turn only.

4. Betting is possible in Hong Kong Rules. The following rules cover the concept of betting.

• A bet is defined as a contract between two players, wagering a sum of MB in their possession, that an event will take place. In game turns, a bet is a Free Action. All funds expend-

THE CLASSICS REVISTED: OUTPOST GAMMA / Duke Ritenhouse

Editor's note: All review categories are based on a 1- to 5-Vindie rating scale.

Vital stats

Full title: Outpost Gamma.
Publisher: Heritage / Dwarfstar (1981).
Designer: Howard Barasch.
Contents: 24-page rulebook, 154 die-cut counters, mounted full-color map.

The conflict

Irda is a Tatooine-like planet of little interest — except for the fact that's it's the only world capable of producing "Irda stones," fabulous gems unmatched anywhere in the galaxy for their beauty.

Mining the stones used to be a fairly routine task for the Twarg miners on the planet, but not of late. The Irdans, the planet's only bipedal creatures, have begun to make their presence felt in a most unpleasant and socially unacceptable manner. Namely, they've begun to raid, pillage, burn and kill.

Enter a small peacekeeping force of elite Imperial Legionaires. The Empire figures 10 troopers will be quite enough to both squash any more uprisings and to protect the Twarg miners. In fact, the Imperial soldiers have been issued only their riot-control gear, not their more lethal wartime equipment.

In short, the Empire has seriously underestimated the destruction that a force of angry Irdans is capable of causing ... and 10 Imperial troopers might have to bear the brunt of that miscalculation.

Physical quality

Rulebook: Entirely in black and white, but very clean and crisp. Numerous illustrations are included, of varying quality. The final two pages are made up of charts and tables. ✔✔✔✔✔

Counters: Very sweet. Fully die-cut and quite colorful. A superior job. ✔✔✔✔✔

Map: A rarity for the microgames of the era — the map is actually mounted, in this case on a thin strip of cardboard. Graphically, it's also very striking to look at, with its dominant browns and greens. Two negatives, however: it requires major work to get the map to actually lay flat, and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish exactly what terrain is supposed to be in which hex (there's too many shades of brown running rampant). ✔✔✔

Quality of rules

Clarity (are the rules presented well?): The presentation is quite good. In fact, the first real rule does not appear until page 11; the

Join in the fun

I'll accept — in fact, I'm actively seeking — reviews of any classic-era SF or fantasy boardgames. There's only three rules that have to be followed:
• The game must have a publication date of 1984 or earlier.
• The review MUST follow the format given in the accompanying article. It's probably a character flaw on my part, but in drives me insane when a publication can't follow the same review format from one issue to the next. Consistency in reviews is a high priority in my life.
So, while the opinions will be your own, any game reviewed must contain a **brief introduction**, the relevant **vital stats**, a short discussion of **the conflict** involved, and ratings for each of the following categories: **physical quality** (rules, counters, map), **quality of rules** (clarity, complexity, effectiveness), and **quality of play** (mechanics, fun). Finally, an **overall rating** should end the review. All ratings should be from one to five Vindie's (no halves or other fractions).
• The article cannot be more than 650 words long. For purposes of comparison, the Outpost Gamma review is 726 words long — but, hey, I'm the editor. So the review is in your court, so to speak. Scour those shelves for the old classics that deserve to be looked at again.

—DR

previous pages are taken up with introductions, a table of contents, and a glossary of terms. There's also quite a few examples scattered throughout the rulebook. ✔✔✔✔✔

Complexity (too much, too little, just right?): Well, it's not **Campaign for North Africa**, but Outpost Gamma has a surprising amount of complexity. The sequence of play has 10 steps, for example. But particularly difficult to grasp are the terrain rules; for a microgame, Outpost Gamma has a bewildering variety of terrains and terrain-related rules. ✔✔✔

Effectiveness (do the rules help simulate what is supposed to be simulated?): The designers were obviously striving to introduce a feeling of impending doom (at least for the Imperial player). It's a classic struggle of strength-vs.-strength: the Imperials have only 10 units, but each is very powerful; the Irdans are basically cannon-fodder, but there's a whole lot of them. The Imperials cannot be everywhere at once — can they possibly hope to contain the natives' advance? It's fun to try and find out. ✔✔✔✔✔

Quality of play

Mechanics: Movement and combat are both strictly Igo-Hugo. Movement must take into account the previously mentioned somewhat-intense terrain rules. Combat is resolved using a differential formula. ✔✔✔

Fun: Once you get past the terrain rules and make some stabs at strategy and tactics, Outpost Gamma can be quite fun. The Imperial player is very strong at the beginning — it's kind of like playing **Ogre** and having 10 Mark IIIs to mess around with. The Irdan player's units are basically expendable, but he doesn't want to get too cute. They key for the

Irdans is to advance behind a big "energy storm" cloud — these tend to disrupt the Imperials' communications and weapons systems. ✔✔✔✔

Overall

Graphically, it's hard to beat any of the eight Dwarfstar/Heritage microgames of the early 80s — they were ahead of their time then, and they're still gorgeous to look at now. Outpost Gamma is no exception; it is a superior achievement graphically.

It can also be quite fun to play. The balance of power is very subtle, especially for the Empire player. Losing the first Legionaire represents a 10-percent reduction in forces; losing further troopers makes the situation that much dicier. But the steep initial learning curve precludes a perfect five-Vindie rating.

✔✔✔✔

MICROGAME CHECKLIST

No one ever produced just one micro-sized game. Due to their small size and low cost of production, every company that jumped on the Metagaming bandwagon in the late 1970s and early 1980s endeavored to release a *series* of small games. Whether they were called "pocket games," "mini-games," or whatever, the theme was pretty much the same — if Metagaming can do it, then surely our company can push a few games out the door, too.

What follows is a collector's checklist / reference guide for the major microgame series released during gaming's Golden Age. The criteria for inclusion on the list was two-fold: first, the games in question had to be small in size (not much bigger than the average Metagaming microgame); second, the game had to have been part of a series of similar games.

This research was compiled from my own gaming collection, old company catalogs, and a handful of Internet sites dedicated to the microgame era. It is open to modification. Additions, subtractions, and/or clarifications are welcome. Please e-mail the editor with any comments.

Metagaming

Series title: Microgames (also known as MicroGames)
First title: 1977
Final title: 1982
No. of releases: 22

- ☐ Ogre 1977
- ☐ Chitin: I 1977
- ☐ Melee 1977
- ☐ WarpWar..................1977
- ☐ Rivets 1977
- ☐ Wizard...................1977
- ☐ Olympica 1978
- ☐ G.E.V. 1978
- ☐ Ice War 1978
- ☐ Black Hole 1978
- ☐ Sticks & Stones 1978
- ☐ Invasion of the Air-Eaters 1979
- ☐ Holy War 1979
- ☐ Annihilator/One World 1979
- ☐ Hot Spot 1979
- ☐ Artifact 1980
- ☐ Dimension Demons 1980
- ☐ The Lords of Underearth 1980
- ☐ Helltank 1981
- ☐ Trailblazer 1981
- ☐ Helltank Destroyer 1982
- ☐ Starleader: Assault 1982

SPI

Series title: Space Capsules, Magic Capsules and Fantasy Capsules
First title: 1979
Final title: 1980
No. of releases: 8

- ☐ Gondor 1977
- ☐ Sauron 1977
- ☐ Creature / Sheboygan 1979

- ☐ Stargate 1979
- ☐ Titan Strike 1979
- ☐ Vector 3 1979
- ☐ Demons 1980
- ☐ Death Maze 1980

Task Force Games

Series title: Task Force games
First title: 1979
Final title: 1983
No. of releases: 22

- ☐ Starfire 1979
- ☐ Asteroid Zero-Four 1979
- ☐ Cerberus 1979
- ☐ Star Fleet Battles 1979
- ☐ Armor at Kursk 1979
- ☐ Valkenburg Castle 1979
- ☐ Spellbinder 1979
- ☐ Intruder 1980
- ☐ Swordquest ....1980 (?)
- ☐ Operation Pegasus .....1980 (?)
- ☐ Starfire II 1980
- ☐ Robots 1980
- ☐ Battlewagon 1981
- ☐ Survival / The Barbarian 1981
- ☐ Ultra-Warrior ....1982 (?)
- ☐ Starfire III ....1982 (?)
- ☐ Moon Base Clavius 1982
- ☐ Warriors of Batak 1982
- ☐ Boarding Party 1982
- ☐ Escape from Altassar 1983
- ☐ City-States of Arkyrell 1983
- ☐ Checkpoint Omega 1983

Heritage/Dwarfstar

Series title: none
First title: 1981
Final title: 1982

No. of releases: 8

- ☐ Barbarian Prince 1981
- ☐ Outpost Gamma 1981
- ☐ Star Viking 1981
- ☐ Grav Armor 1981
- ☐ Star Smuggler ....1982 (?)
- ☐ Dragon Rage ....1982 (?)
- ☐ Goblin ....1982 (?)
- ☐ Demonlord 1982

TSR

Series title: Minigames
First title: 1981
Final title: 1982
No. of releases: 8

- ☐ Saga: Age of Heroes 1981
- ☐ They've Invaded Pleasantville .1981
- ☐ Vampyre 1981
- ☐ Revolt on Antares 1981
- ☐ Attack Force 1982
- ☐ Viking Gods 1982
- ☐ Remember the Alamo 1982
- ☐ Icebergs 1982

Steve Jackson Games

Series title: None (sometimes called "pocket-box" games)
First title: 1980
Final title: 1983
No. of releases: Depends on whether or not games such as Ogre, G.E.V., and Car Wars — and their multiple expansions — are counted.

- ☐ One-Page Bulge 1980
- ☐ Raid on Iran 1980
- ☐ Battlesuit 1980
- ☐ Kung Fu 2100 ....1980 (?)
- ☐ Undead 1981
- ☐ Necromancer 1983

THE FANTASY TRIP GETS WIRED

Here's living proof that **The Fantasy Trip** is alive and well, despite not being supported since the early 1980s. Pictured below is a screen-capture I did for the "front page" of a Web-site devoted entirely to Metagaming's classic RPG release. Included is the URL, which will hopefully show up after this page is printed and this issue goes to press.

And, trust me, this screen shot does not do this site justice. Due to the limitations of the size of my monitor and practical considerations of getting at least part of this image onto an 8.5-by-11 page, I chopped off the Web-page at less than a third of its length. And, of course, the entire site is in color, which would be too expensive for me to reproduce here.

Other than this short introduction, I'm going to let this site speak for itself. Here's the bottom line: **Fantasy Trip** fans, you *must* visit this site.

— D.R.

Netscape: index

ion : http://www.reese.org/tft/index.html

The Fantasy Trip

A World Wide Web Resource

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Featured Review: TFT by Ron Pehr. Posted 11/06	**Melee Map (Word 97)**	**Brainiac's Rules Clarifications and Additions**
New Weapons for TFT by Rick Smith. Posted 11/06	**Melee Map (PDF)**	**New Death and Dying Rules**
TFT Traveller posted 11/02		**Errata for Ty's Campaign**
Converting D&D Monsters to TFT by Steve Jackson		

STARMADA: A REVIEW / Timothy Swenson

Introduction

Starmada is a tactical space combat game designed by Dan Kast. A few years back, Starmada started out as a loose jumble of notes defining a game. Over time it has gone from version 1 to version 2 and finally version 3.1. (*editor's note: since this review was written, version 4 has become available.*)

Starmada is a freeware game that was initially posted to **rec.games.board** with a long-term availability on its own web page (**www.staff.uiuc.edu/~cricket/starmada/index.html**). Some might say that Starmada is really a shareware game, since the full game is not available on the web page. The game on the web page only lacks "Appendix A: Astronautics", the ship design rules. Since the game comes with a few pre-designed ships, Appendix A is not totally necessary.

To get the "full" game send $10 to: Dan Kast, URH 129 Babcock, 906 West College Court, Urbana, IL, 61801. You will get a printed copy of the game (with velo-binding) and be put on the Starmada mailing list, which includes an infrequently published newsletter. You can copy the print version to give to other players.

What it's about

Starmada is a fairly simple game. Ships are composed of the following stats: Movement Track, Shields, To-Hit, Range, Weapons and Special Equipment. Starship Record Cards are used to keep track of the ships during the game. The Turn Phases are: Movement, Fighter and Combat.

Fighters are treated separately from starships and have their own phase to move and fight.

The Movement phase is composed of two parts — write movement orders and move ships. Ship movement is pre-plotted by writing down how each ship will move. Movement orders are simple and tell how far forward the ship moves and which way it turns. An example is "3P2" — move three hexes forward, turn one hexside to port and then move two hexes forward. Once all orders have been written, both players move their ships, strictly following the movement orders.

Only starships with fighter bays may carry fighters. Fighter movement is not pre-plotted. Both fighter movement and combat take place in one phase and at the same time. Players take turns moving and fighting with each fighter squadron until all squadrons have completed their actions. Fighters have a range of 1 and may only attack ships directly in front of them. In attacks on ships, fighters act like phasers. In attacks on fighters, a die roll of 5 or 6 destroys one fighter in the enemy squadron.

Combat is not complex and only has three rolls: the To-Hit roll, Shields roll and the Damage roll. Each weapon may only attack ships within its firing arc and within the attacking ship's range. Once an enemy ship is within the firing arc and range, a To-Hit roll is made for each weapon fired. If any of the die rolls are higher or equal to the ship's To-Hit, the weapon has struck the target. For each of these hits a die roll is made; if any are greater than the Shield value, then these hits have penetrated the shields and caused damage. A third die roll is done to see which ship systems are damaged.

Some spice

To spice the game up, there are a number of different weapons and special equipment that each ship can have. The weapons are: Laser Cannon, Disruptor, Fusion Torpedo, Ion Cannon, Mass Driver, Phoenix Missile and Plasma Bolter.

Special Equipment is: Anti-Fighter Batteries, Armor Plating, Cloaking Device and Electronic Countermeasures.

As mentioned, with the registered version of the game come the ship-design rules. Like most such rules, you are given a number of points to spend on the various parts of the ship. The rules are easy to understand, but you will probably want to have a calculator or spreadsheet handy.

The envelope, please

Starmada is a fairly good design. It set out to be simple and achieves that goal. The only change I would make is in the movement system. As it is, ships can move any, some or none of their movement points in a turn. This means that a ship may move one hex in one turn and then move four hexes in the next.

That makes for some pretty hefty acceleration. I prefer a system that forces you to move all of your movement points, but allows you to accelerate or decelerate a few hexes per turn. This makes the game a little more realistic without adding much to the rules.

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ed or wagered for a bet MUST come from the Illuminati's treasury (the Megabucks on the pink card), not from groups the Illuminati controls.

• The condition of the bet must be game-related.

• Bets can be Instant or Deadlined.

• Instant bets are announced at any point during a player's turn. The conditions of the bet must be acknowledged by stating either "Accepted" or "Rejected." The minimum wager for an Instant bet is one half of the Illuminati's personal treasury.

• Deadlined bets are written down on a piece of scrap paper, which is folded over so that there is an outside that the other players can see, and an inside

that only the two participants in the bet can see. On the inside of the bet, the player initiating the wager writes down the condition (defined as "what he is betting on") and the amount of the wager. On the outside, the player initiating the wager writes Initiator and draws an arrow to Recipient (the player the Initiator is betting with), and notes a Deadline. The Deadline is the number of turns the Initiator is betting the Recipient for the Condition to come to pass. The maximum number of turns for a Deadlined bet condition is three .

• If a condition of a deadlined bet comes to pass before the agreed upon deadline is expired, the loser of the wager immediately places the agreed-upon sum upon the Illuminati card of the other player. If

he does not have the amount agreed upon, he can wait the number of turns in the deadline to pay off his debt. If he loses the bet's condition and still does not have the money to pay up, he is to be penalized. The winner of the event is then known as "The Aggrieved Party (see below)."

• The player who won the bet must remove a group from the losing player's power structure. The group must be taken from the farthest position out from the parent Illuminati. Exception: The Aggrieved Party may not remove the last card from the offending player's power structure. Instead, He may garnish the next turn's income from that player's Illuminati. After the debt is paid, the offending party returns to normal status.
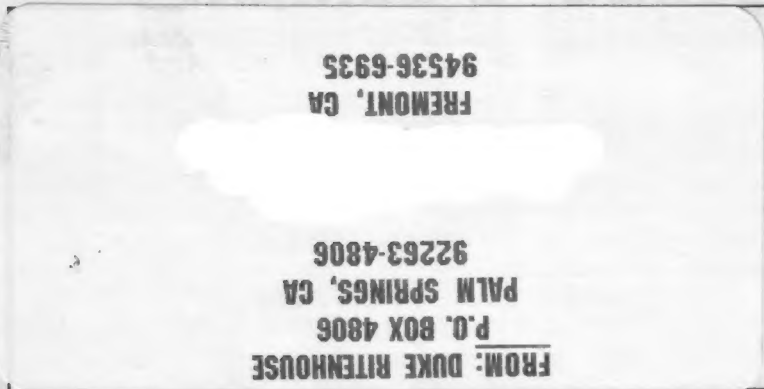
VINDIE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

What I'm looking for

Articles relating to Metagaming's Microgames, other classic SF/fantasy boardgames of the '70s and '80s, and contemporary games that seem to fit in with the "spirit" of the classic boardgames era.

Specifically, I'd like to publish:

• New scenarios.
• Variants and rule changes or extensions.
• Strategy tips.
• Unit analysis and statistics.
• Reviews of contemporary games or interest.
• Opinion pieces/editorials (although I am going to try to write one of these myself for every issue, so I might not have room for too many more).
• Letters to the editor.

The above suggestions are by no means exclusive — I'll publish anything that appears interesting enough.

What I'm not looking for

• Poetry.

• Artwork. At least for the first few issues that I produce, I am going to keep my costs down by not hiring a professional printer or typesetter. What you're reading now was produced entirely on my home computer — the minute I start accepting art, I'm looking at halftoning and other printing headaches. So, for now at least, no art.

Exception: Very, very simple charts or countersheets or the like that would look acceptable through either photocopying or by having me redraw them are acceptable.

• Fiction. Unless it's very short and you're very good. Minimum requirement: you've appeared in a publication I've heard of.

• Articles on games such as **Battletech**, **Warhammer**, most role-playing games — with the exception of **The Fantasy Trip** — and **Squad Leader**. All of these types of games already have larger, more elaborate magazines devoted to them.

How to send submissions

VINDICATOR is entirely produced on my home Macintosh. Therefore, articles submitted on a Mac-formatted floppy disk or Zip disk are desirable (I won't return floppies, but I will return Zips). **IMPORTANT NOTE:** As of Nov. 15, 1998, I will no longer accept any work produced on a PC disk. There's just too many hassles involved in making PC-based work look good on a Macintosh. All such disks will be returned to the author.

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